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SUBJECT: GUEHENNO SAYS DPKO WILL LIMIT SAMARDZIC TRAVEL TO
KOSOVO MORE AS ELECTIONS APPROACH

REF: MARIZ/SCHUFLETOWSKI E-MAIL

USUN NEW Y 00000298 001.2 OF 002

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Quint mission representatives delivered to UN U/SYG Guehenno demarche points (ref) on Kosovo transition issues. Guehenno said any dialogue UNMIK conducts needs to include key stakeholders and that DPKO takes preventing violence seriously, but called for practical engagement in recognition of the limits to what force can do. He speculated that it may be necessary to blur to some degree the relationship between UNMIK and the EU, especially if UNMIK is unable to fade away. He stated that Serbian Minister for Kosovo Samardzic's trips to Kosovo could become more harmful as Serbian parliamentary elections approach and that DPKO is considering limiting them more than previously. Ambassador Wolff called for giving careful thought to how to deal with Serbian elections with a view to avoiding actions that might enhance Samardzic's credibility or play into Belgrade's effort to establish parallel institutions. In a pull-aside with Ambassador Wolff and other Quint principals, Guehenno said that on UNMIK staffing issues, the status quo will be maintained for now. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) In an April 1 meeting, the Quint delivered to U/SYG for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) Jean-Marie Guehenno demarche points on Kosovo transition issues (ref). Participants included Ambassador Wolff, French PermRep Jean-Maurice Ripert, UK Deputy PermRep Karen Pierce, Italian Permrep Marcello Spatafora, German Charge Martin Ney, A/SYG Secretary General Edmund Mulet, DPKO political officers Marco

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Bianchini, Christina Koch-Avran and Dennis Besedic and USUN poloff.

¶3. (SBU) In responding to the Quint demarche, Guehenno concurred that dialogue is needed because matters in Kosovo "are not unfolding as expected." He said the SYG's key objectives are to minimize violence and preserve the UN's legacy. Guehenno stated that the UN will protect law and order and not allow Serbian elements to take illegal actions such as the recent occupation by force of the courthouse in North Mitrovica. Guehenno warned, however, that limits to what force can do mean the best approach to resolving problems in Kosovo is political dialogue. He continued that as dialogue proceeds Russia will hopefully "send signals to Belgrade" that make it easier "to reach understanding on practical issues." Guehenno dismissed Serbian Minister for Kosovo Samardzic's recent proposal that would appear to

sanction de facto partition as "clearly unacceptable to the UN," but said dialogue with Serbia is necessary on areas including police, justice, customs, administrative boundaries and religious and cultural matters. Guehenno agreed on the need to distinguish between practical and institutional issues in any UN-Serbia discussion but feared that as dialogue unfolds some practical and institutional issues could become harder to distinguish.

¶4. (SBU) Guehenno said de facto partition needs to be avoided through approaches that clarify the distinction between northern Kosovo and Serbia and minimize distinctions between northern and southern Kosovo. He said DPKO takes preventing violence seriously, but there is a limit to what force can do. Political engagement remains the best option. Guehenno warned that the international community cannot rely completely on UNMIK and KFOR standing their ground in the north.

¶5. (SBU) On visits by Serbian officials to Kosovo, Guehenno said that DPKO thinks Samardzic's trips could become more harmful as Serbian parliamentary elections approach and thus DPKO will exercise greater caution in allowing Samardzic to come in during the electoral campaign. DPKO's Bianchini also said UNMIK is thinking through how to deal with Serbian municipal elections in northern Kosovo because, unlike parliamentary elections where UNMIK has always had a "do-not-stop/do-not-facilitate approach," municipal elections would represent a break from past practice.

¶6. (SBU) Guehenno also said we need to think through what the role for UNMIK will be if it cannot just fade away as was hoped for. He said the UN would prefer "a clean break" but needed to protect stability and its legacy "so adjustments may be needed." Being present only in the north would seem to bless de facto partition. On the other hand, being present also in the south would "require the understanding of all key stakeholders." He added that it will also be necessary to

USUN NEW Y 00000298 002.2 OF 002

fudge the relationship between the UN and EU to some degree.

¶7. (SBU) French Permrep Ripert called for avoiding tensions with Belgrade during the pre-election period. German Deputy Permrep Ney called Samardzic's proposal dangerous because it implies the practical division of Kosovo and thus has institutional importance. On visits, Ney said that benchmarks would help avoid the appearance that any policy is ad hoc and one benchmark should be "hate speech." Ambassador Wolff called for giving careful thought to how to deal with municipal elections and asked whether DPKO had thought about how to deal with the issue. Wolff said we should give thought to the best way to avoid enhancing Samardzic's credibility in the context of the upcoming elections in Serbia and also how best to avoid any acquiescence in Serbia's efforts to establish parallel institutions.
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